

Good afternoon. My name is Pastor Jackie Jackson. I'm from Cincinnati and work as a Community Outreach Advocate through the Office Human Relations for the City of Cincinnati. My job is to respond to all shootings and homicides that happen in the 5 Cincinnati Police Districts, providing on-site counseling, assist in crowd control, conflict resolution, and minister to the loved ones of the victim.

I'm here representing myself as a volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

Not only do I deal with gun violence for work, but I personally have been affected by gun violence numerous times. At 10 years old I was shot at by a neighbor who was mentally unstable. That bullet went through my hand and hit my friend in the lower torso. My family has been affected by gun violence where 8 family members were murdered between 2014 and 2016. I've also had a number of family members shot, including my oldest son, who is alive by the grace of God.

I share all this with you, so you know that when I talk about guns and gun violence, it is very personal. I want to talk to you today about the Stand Your Ground provision of HB 228.

Ohio already has a self-defense law that works well, and HB 228 would not only upend centuries of traditional self-defense doctrine, but it is also a threat to public safety. This bill allows a person to kill another person in public places like parks, roads, and playgrounds -- even if he or she could clearly and safely walk away from danger.

I acknowledge that if this bill passes, Stand Your Ground isn't going to be something that will come up a lot in my job, but because Stand Your Ground creates a culture of "shoot first, ask questions later" I guarantee that it will add to the problems of gun violence in my city. I can see how some people will expect to get away with murder because of Stand Your Ground.

The research backs up these predictions of mine. Stand Your Ground laws do not deter crime. Instead, they encourage armed vigilantism, disproportionately affect minorities, and are associated with increases in homicide rates. A 2012 study by researchers at Texas A&M found that in 21 states that have Stand Your Ground laws, these laws are associated with a clear increase in homicides, resulting in 600 more homicides per year. A study by professors at Oxford and the University of Pennsylvania released last year found that Florida's Stand Your Ground law was associated with a 32 percent increase in firearm homicides. At the same time, homicides considered justifiable tripled.

We don't need more reasons to be killing each other. I'm sure this committee is committed to saving lives and keeping Ohioans safe. So, I challenge you today to come up with real solutions that will do just that. We need solutions that will get guns out of the wrong hands. We need solutions that will help our urban youth solve problems without guns. These are the things that will heal our communities and keep families together. Stand Your Ground is not the answer. Vote no on HB 228.

